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Remarks

We have amended claims 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9 for greater precision in distinguishing the present invention from the cited art and to remove the "adapted to" language from several phrases in view of the Examiner's opinion that those phrases were "not deemed to be positive limitations". Also, we have added dependent claims 12 and 13 to claim a feature described at page 3, lines 13 and 14 of the specification.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-11 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Russell (WO-94/23957) in view of Hauser (3,315,387).

Russell describes a laminate including a graphic having a layer of pressure-sensitive adhesive along its rear surface so that the graphic is adhearable to a substrate by the layer of adhesive, which laminate includes a separate polymeric cover sheet overlaying the graphic portion, and a layer of removable pressure-sensitive adhesive firmly adhered to the inner major surface of the cover sheet and having its front surface removably adhered to the front surface of the graphic portion. The graphic on the laminate described by Russell is complete.

In contrast, the present invention provides an assemblage of laminates, each of which laminates includes a graphic portion having a layer of pressure-sensitive adhesive along its rear surface, the graphic portions in the laminates being adhearable to a substrate by the layers of adhesive in a predetermined relative orientation to form on the substrate a graphic having a predetermined shape; each of the laminates further including a separate polymeric cover sheet overlaying the graphic portion, and a layer of removable pressure-sensitive adhesive having its rear surface firmly adhered to the inner major surface of the cover sheet and having its front surface removably adhered to the front surface of the graphic portion, the cover sheets having irregular visually distinctive mating edges shaped for edge-to-edge engagement only when said graphic portions are in the predetermined relative orientation. As noted in the specification at page 3, lines 13 to 16, the assemblage of laminates according to the present invention allows large graphics, such as elongate graphics over 6 feet or 1.8 meters long to be conveniently manufactured, transported, and handled during application, while still facilitating easy and accurate installation of such graphics by either professional or non-professional installers (e.g., homeowners).

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The Examiner has acknowledged these differences between Russell and the present invention by citing Heuser and noting that "Hauser discloses adhesive labels with alignment means in the shape of mating edges (9, 10) that extend past the peripheral edge of the cover sheet."

We find no teaching or suggestion in Heuser to modify the structure of Russell by separating its graphic laminate into adhesive labels of the type described by Heuser, but even this was obvious, (a supposition which applicants deny) the resulting structure would not be structure of the present invention as claimed in claim 1. The adhesive labels described by Heuser can be assembled in any order. Thus, there could be no assurance that those adhesive labels would be adhered to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form on the substrate a graphic having a predetermined shape.

In contrast, in the assemblage of laminates according to the present invention as claimed in claim 1, the cover sheets having irregular visually distinctive mating edges shaped for edge-to-edge engagement only when the graphic portions are in a predetermined relative orientation. This feature is not shown or suggested by either Russell or Heuser or any combination thereof, and patentably distinguishes the present invention from the structures described in those references. Claim 1 should be allowed.

Claims 2 through 11 are dependent on claim 1 and thus are allowable for all of the reasons given above. Additionally, these claims recite further structural limitations that are not shown or made obvious by the cited references.

For example:

Claim 2 recites that the graphic is elongate, and the graphic portions have parts extending past each other longitudinally of the graphic when the graphic portions are adhered to a substrate in their predetermined relative orientation to form a graphic.

Claim 3 recites that the graphic includes graphic portions projecting in two directions generally at a right angle with respect to each other, and the graphic portions have parts extending past each other in those two directions when the graphic portions are adhered to a substrate in the predetermined relative orientation.

Claim 5 recites that the graphic is elongate, the assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative

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orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, the three graphic portions being essentially identical, having first and second ends, and being adherable to the substrate in any order with the first ends of two of the graphic portions positioned adjacent the second ends of two of the graphic portions; and the cover sheets of the laminates including the graphic portions are essentially identical, each having a first irregular visually distinctive mating edge adjacent the first end of said graphic portion and having an opposite second irregular visually distinctive mating edge adjacent the second end of the graphic portion engageable edge-to-edge with the first irregular visually distinctive mating edges of either of the other two cover sheets to place the graphic portions in the predetermined relative orientation.

Claim 6 recites that the graphic is elongate, the assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, the three graphic portions including a central graphic portion having opposite identically shaped ends and a pair of essentially identical end graphic portions having first and second ends adherable to the substrate at the opposite identical ends of the central graphic portions with the first ends of the end graphic portions adjacent the identical ends of the central graphic portions; and the cover sheet of the laminate including the central graphic portion have identical irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the identical ends of the central graphic portion, and the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of end graphic portions are essentially identical, have first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the first ends of the end graphic portions engageable edge-to-edge with the identical irregular mating edges of the cover sheet adhered to the central graphic portion.

Claim 7 recites that the graphic is elongate, the assemblage includes at least four laminates including graphic portions adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, the four graphic portions including a pair of essentially identical central graphic portions having first and second ends and being adherable to the substrate with the first ends adjacent at the center of the graphic and a pair of essentially identical end graphic portions having first and second ends adherable to the substrate at the opposite ends of the central graphic portions with said first ends of said end graphic portions adjacent the second ends of the central graphic portions; and the cover sheets of

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the laminates including the pair of central graphic portions being essentially identical, having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the first ends of the central graphic portions engageable edge to edge with each other, and having opposite second irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the second ends of the central graphic portions, and the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of end graphic portions being essentially identical, having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the first ends of the end graphic portions engageable edge to edge with the second irregular mating edges of either of the cover sheets adhered to the pair of central graphic portions, the first irregular visually distinctive mating edges of the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of central graphic portions being different than and easily visually distinguishable from the second irregular mating edges of the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of central graphic portions and the first irregular mating edges of the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of end graphic portions.

Claim 8 recites that in the assemblage according to claim 7 the graphic portions have parts extending past each other longitudinally of the graphic when the graphic portions are in their predetermined relative orientation, and the mating edges on the cover sheets extend around the parts and at least 0.1 inch or 0.25 cm past the adjacent peripheral edge of the parts of the graphic portions.

Claim 9 recites that the graphic is elongate, the assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, the three graphic portions including a central graphic portion having opposite identically shaped ends and a pair of mirror image end graphic portions having first and second ends adherable to the substrate at the opposite identical ends of the central graphic portions with the first ends of the end graphic portions adjacent the identical ends of the central graphic portions; and the cover sheet of the laminate including the central graphic portion have identical irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the identical ends of the central graphic portion, and the cover sheets of the laminates including the pair of mirror image end graphic portions have first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the first ends of the end graphic portions engageable edge-to-edge with the opposite irregular mating edges of the cover sheet adhered to the central graphic portion.

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Reconsideration, and allowance of all of the claims in this application are respectfully requested.

Following is a copy of the amended claims showing the changes made by this amendment.

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The amended claims showing the changes made by this amendment:

1. (amended) An assemblage of laminates, each of said laminates including a graphic portion having front and rear major surfaces and a peripheral edge, and a layer of pressure-sensitive adhesive along the rear surface of the graphic portion, the graphic portions in said laminates being [adapted to be adhered] adhearable to a substrate by the layers of adhesive in a predetermined relative orientation to form on the substrate a graphic having a predetermined shape;

each of said laminates further including a separate polymeric cover sheet having opposite outer and inner major surfaces and overlaying the graphic portion, and a layer of removable pressure-sensitive adhesive having opposite front and rear major surfaces, said layer of removable pressure-sensitive adhesive being coextensive with and having its rear surface firmly adhered to the inner major surface of the cover sheet and having its front surface removably adhered to the front surface of the graphic portion;

said cover sheets having irregular visually distinctive mating edges shaped for edge-to-edge engagement only when said graphic portions are in said predetermined relative orientation; and

said mating edges on said cover sheets extending at least 0.05 inch or 0.13 cm past the adjacent peripheral edges of said graphic portions to protect the graphic portions and provide a predetermined spacing between said graphic portions when said mating edges are in said edge-to-edge engagement.

2. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic is elongate, and said graphic portions have parts extending past each other longitudinally of said graphic when said graphic portions are adhered to a substrate in said predetermined relative orientation.

3. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic includes graphic portions projecting in two directions generally at a right angle with respect to each other, and said graphic portions have parts extending past each other in said two directions when said graphic portions are adhered to a substrate in said predetermined relative orientation.

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5. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic is elongate, said assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions [adapted to be adhered] adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, said three graphic portions being essentially identical, having first and second ends, and being [adapted to be adhered] adherable to the substrate in any order with the first ends of two of said graphic portions positioned adjacent the second ends of two of said graphic portions; and

said cover sheets of said laminates including said graphic portions being essentially identical, each having a first irregular visually distinctive mating edge adjacent said first end of said graphic portion and having an opposite second irregular visually distinctive mating edge adjacent the second end of said graphic portion [adapted for] engageable edge-to-edge [engagement] with the first irregular visually distinctive mating edges of either of the other two cover sheets to [afford placing] place said graphic portions in said predetermined relative orientation.

6. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic is elongate, said assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions [adapted to be adhered] adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, said three graphic portions including a central graphic portion having opposite identically shaped ends and a pair of essentially identical end graphic portions having first and second ends [adapted to be adhered] adherable to the substrate at the opposite identical ends of the central graphic portions with said first ends of said end graphic portions adjacent the identical ends of said central graphic portions; and

said cover sheet of said laminate including said central graphic portion having identical irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said identical ends of said central graphic portion, and said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of end graphic portions being essentially identical, having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said first ends of said end graphic portions [adapted for] engageable edge-to-edge [engagement] with the identical irregular mating edges of said cover sheet adhered to said central graphic portion.

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7. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic is elongate, said assemblage includes at least four laminates including graphic portions [adapted to be adhered] adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, said four graphic portions including a pair of essentially identical central graphic portions having first and second ends and [adapted to be adhered] being adherable to the substrate with said first ends adjacent at the center of the graphic and a pair of essentially identical end graphic portions having first and second ends [adapted to be adhered] adherable to the substrate at the opposite ends of the central graphic portions with said first ends of said end graphic portions adjacent the second ends of said central graphic portions; and

said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of central graphic portions being essentially identical, having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said first ends of said central graphic portions [adapted for] engageable edge to edge [engagement] with each other, and having opposite second irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent the second ends of said central graphic portions, and said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of end graphic portions being essentially identical, having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said first ends of said end graphic portions [adapted for] engageable edge to edge [engagement] with the second irregular mating edges of either of said cover sheets adhered to said pair of central graphic portions, said first irregular visually distinctive mating edges of said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of central graphic portions being different than and easily visually distinguishable from the second irregular mating edges of said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of central graphic portions and said first irregular mating edges of said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of end graphic portions.

9. (amended) An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic is elongate, said assemblage includes at least three laminates including graphic portions [adapted to be adhered] adherable to a substrate in a predetermined relative orientation to form the graphic having the predetermined shape, said three graphic portions including a central graphic portion having opposite identically shaped ends and a pair of mirror image end graphic portions having first and second ends [adapted to be adhered] adherable to the substrate at the opposite identical ends of

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the central graphic portions with said first ends of said end graphic portions adjacent the identical ends of said central graphic portions; and

said cover sheet of said laminate including said central graphic portion having identical irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said identical ends of said central graphic portion, and said cover sheets of said laminates including said pair of mirror image end graphic portions having first irregular visually distinctive mating edges adjacent said first ends of said end graphic portions [adapted for] engageable edge-to-edge [engagement] with the opposite irregular mating edges of said cover sheet adhered to said central graphic portion.

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Claims that have not been amended:

4. An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said mating edges on said cover sheets extend at least 0.1 inch or 0.25 cm past the adjacent peripheral edge of the graphic portions.

8. An assemblage according to claim 7 wherein said graphic portions have parts extending past each other longitudinally of said graphic when said graphic portions are in said predetermined relative orientation, and said mating edges on said cover sheets extend around said parts and at least 0.1 inch or 0.25 cm past the adjacent peripheral edge of said parts of the graphic portions.

10. An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic portions each include a plurality of die cut parts.

11. An assemblage according to claim 1 wherein said graphic portions each include a plurality of elongate strips having parallel elongate edges.